



**For immediate release
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DCR REOPENS LONGFELLOW BRIDGE TO ALL TRAFFIC

Sidewalk repairs on the bridge set to begin in March and be completed by July 4

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is reopening the Longfellow Bridge to all traffic, following Federal Highway Administration approval of repairs undertaken by DCR during the past year and a half. DCR's next step on the Longfellow will be repairing the upstream sidewalk (Cambridge-to-Boston side), scheduled to begin in March.

Since August 2007, DCR has spent more than \$12.5 million on repairs and inspections at the Longfellow Bridge. Nearly 210 tons of new steel have been installed under the roadbed, including 275 new steel posts, 472 jack beams, 621 stringers, and 9 floor beams.

Last June, the repairs necessitated an inside-lane closure on both sides of the bridge, reducing traffic to one lane in each direction. Also, all large trucks were prohibited from using the bridge. In September, the Boston-to-Cambridge lane was reopened and trucks were permitted in that direction.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has now given approval for the Cambridge-to-Boston lane to reopen as well. Also, large trucks will now be allowed in both directions on the bridge.

"We are delighted to be able to reopen the lane and remove the truck restriction on the Longfellow Bridge," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. "DCR crews have worked around the clock for more than 15 months to make the repairs and ensure public safety on this important part of the Charles River Basin transportation infrastructure. We look forward to having the upstream sidewalk ready and open for the hundreds of spectators who enjoy that vantage point during the July 4 concert and fireworks on the Esplanade."

In a letter to Commissioner Sullivan today, Lucy Garliauskas, division administrator with the FHWA, said the FHWA had reviewed the revised load rating calculations for the upstream lane on the Longfellow Bridge that reflect the recently completed repairs on the bridge.

"We found the load rating calculations acceptable and concur with the state to remove the left-lane restrictions on this bridge structure," Garliauskas wrote.

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DCR will reopen the bridge Friday morning, February 13, at 5 a.m.

NEL Inc. of Georgetown, Mass., which did the repairs under the traffic lanes of the Longfellow, will repair the upstream sidewalk as well. The work will involve repairing and replacing the steel supports underneath the walkways. Currently, that sidewalk is closed pending the repairs.

During the planned full rehabilitation of the Longfellow Bridge, scheduled to get underway within the next few years, DCR plans to keep at least one sidewalk open at all times.

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, and dams, in addition to 278 bridges and miles of roadways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.